

FAMILY COURT MEDIATOR

DEFINITION

Under direction, provides a variety of family law related professional counseling and investigative services, including premarital, marital, child custody/visitation and other domestic relation counseling to individuals referred through the Superior Court; and performs related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This class is a fully qualified licensed counselor with responsibility to make recommendations to the Court regarding conciliation and child custody/visitation matters. Incumbents may supervise interns working in the Family Court Services program.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Provides crisis intervention and short-term counseling services to families and individuals experiencing family relations difficulties by using individual and group counseling techniques.
2. Holds office conferences with the parties to conciliation proceedings and their attorneys; conducts marriage counseling to help concerned parties resolve their difficulties.
3. Conducts mediation counseling to resolve child custody and/or visitation disputes and to assist parties in formulating joint custody plans.
4. Determines if situations exist that may lead to personal and family injury in the marriage dissolution or child custody process; treats problems identified and refers parties to community agencies for long-term counseling when necessary.
5. Examines court case files to obtain pertinent data for assessment; consults with attorneys of record to review information regarding the parties and issues in assigned cases.
6. Conducts field investigations and interviews parents, minors, and other case related persons (i.e. school officials, law enforcement personnel, social service personnel); makes scheduled and unscheduled residential visits for evaluation of minor's home environment and living conditions.

7. Obtains, reviews and evaluates medical and mental health records and other pertinent medical information; may arrange for psychiatric or psychological evaluations.
8. Prepares case histories and evaluations; develops custody and visitation agreements; prepares case reports and makes recommendations to the court; may be required to testify in court regarding same.
9. May supervise one or more interns working in the Family Court Services Program.
10. May speak before community groups to further community acceptance of the program.
11. Performs related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Master's degree in Psychology, Marriage, Family or Child Counseling Social Work or other related behavioral science and two years of increasingly responsible professional child custody, investigations, family or mediation counseling or psychotherapy experience in a setting related to the areas of responsibility of the court or any combination of training and experience that could provide the desired knowledge and abilities. Additional work experience may substitute for post graduation education on a year for year basis. Special Requirement: Possession of a license issued by the State of California as a Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Marriage, Family and Child Therapist (LFMT), or Clinical Psychologist.

Knowledge of

Principles and practices of mental health; adult psychopathology; psychological and socio-economics of the family unit; characteristics and signs of abuse, domestic violence and substance abuse; clinical issues relating to family dysfunction and child behavior/ development; law as related to visitation, custody and parental rights; juvenile delinquency and dependency issues; factors contributing to the development of behavioral issues and individual disputes; mediation and negotiation practices and techniques, individual and group counseling techniques; governmental and private community resources and referral agencies; laws, regulation and professional practice relating to dispute investigation and resolution; legal terminology, court operations and courtroom procedure; courtroom etiquette and conventions.

Ability to

Understand laws and statutes as related to assigned disputes; reach logical and sound conclusions based on evaluation of facts and conflicting information; establish rapport with clients; facilitate individual problem recognition, identification and solution; mediate and resolve disputes; work in environment with conflicting parties; conduct interviews under stressful and/or hostile circumstances; put emotional and hostile individuals at ease; tactfully deal in a pleasant, non-confrontational manner; identify and utilize support services and community resources; establish and work cooperatively with representatives of other organizations; prepare concise reports and records; make formal verbal and written presentations; apply research principles and methods; manage time in a heavy work schedule; prioritize case work; effectively communicate with people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments.

Special Requirements

A California driver's license requirement will be reviewed on a position basis in accordance with ADA regulations

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Strength, dexterity, coordination and vision to use a keyboard and video display terminal on a daily basis. Hearing to communicate with the public and court staff. Dexterity and coordination to handle files and single pieces of paper; occasional lifting of objects weighing up to 25 lbs. such as files, stacks of papers, reference and other materials. Moving from place to place within an office; some reaching for items above and below desk level.

Date Est. 4/00